

# Curse of the Red Death

by LesserWraith

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Summary: 13 teens of Berk are on a journey to kill their very first dragon... and possibly themselves. A gory backstory to how our favorite characters came to be. Now with more descriptions!

## 1. Dragon Slayers

**\*\*Hi. There's 2 things I want to let you know before going into the real story.\*\***

**\*\*First, this story is very gory. Those who do not want to read thus should turn back. You have been warned.\*\***

**\*\*Second, don't get uninterested just because the names you will find right after this message do not seem to relate to HTTYD whatsoever (or if you're already turning back at the name "Haston"). This story uses the same characters from HTTYD, but with their names changed in order to keep the suspense up throughout the whole story. For starters, Haston is Hiccup, which should be obvious as you will see shortly. You should be able to make out the other characters from their descriptions as well.\*\***

**\*\*Enjoy!\*\***

**\* \* \***

**><p><strong>A <strong>\*\*mother \*\*\*\*would \*\*\*\*never \*\*\*\*leave \*\*\*\*her \*\*\*\*children \*\*\*\*to \*\*\*\*die \*\*\*\*in \*\*\*\*vain\*\*\*\*.\*\***

**\*\*Never\*\*\*\*.\*\***

**\*\*Haston\*\***

This is it. We've all been waiting for this day.

Today is the day that we finally hunt down our own dragons. After so many years of training and waiting, we're going to find our very own dragon.

We're going to kill it and show it to our fathers, and they'll all be happy. We'll all be happy.

Well, except me. I don't see the point in killing dragons. They don't look like they're all that bad, aren't they? They just want to survive in this world, just like us. They take what they need and leave; they don't actually kill people. But that's just me, of course.

My name's Haston. And I'm the son of the chief of Berk, where we fend off (and kill) dragons whenever they decide to raid our village for food.

If we slay dragons, are we any better than them?

My friends seem to think otherwise. Well, most of them.

"Aesis, are you sure we're going to just find a dragon in the woods?" I ask the no-nonsense, commanding, and very rough blonde-haired girl in front of me. Her hair swings in ridiculous directions as she leads the path through the woods, jumping over logs and ducking under branches like she's Miss Berk, the Viking Girl.

Stuck up idiot. Still, I like her, and... well, what am I supposed to say to that? When you like someone, you tend to only see their good sides. Their bad sides are all mysteriously gone.

"Shut up and get your rear over here already, Useless," her determined voice says.

I sigh. I'm not going to convince her any time soon. "Are we really going to do this?"

"Hey, on the bright side," Valla's cheerful voice pipes up. "If we kill this dragon, we can't call you Useless anymore." Her flamboyant shirt and skirts make her look more like a sporting girl than a viking. She even has locks in her hair that bounce madly wherever she goes. Valla is like the opposite of Aesis in every way; famous, funny, playful, and absolutely happy-go-lucky.

But, like I said, I like Astrid. Valla, with her light blue hair, yellowish shirt, and blue shorts just seems... dull to me because of that.

"Yeah, Useless," Erik's rough voice says. "But you'll still be useless to me."

I roll my eyes. Erik, the dark-haired and dim-witted bully of the group, always seems to have a reason to pick on me. It doesn't hurt to mention that he's my cousin as well... so he has a lot of rights to hate me.

Call me a coward, but I'm not fighting that muscular nuisance anytime soon.

So I keep my mouth shut as we hike through the woods. They say the deeper parts of the forest holds wounded dragons that aren't healthy enough to fly back to their nests, and that's what we're aiming for. A kill on a creature that can't defend itself.

"Hey, Dean... are you sure this is going to work out?" I ask my friend quietly. My only friend, actually. We live right next to each other, and he's been... orphaned at birth. My father has always taken care of him like a second son, so we're pretty close.

He flips his messy jet-black hair back, his black tunic doing a really good job in hiding all the stains that he's getting as he hikes. He's skillful, but he doesn't show it to not intimidate me, the latter being unskilled at mostly everything. Well, that's what I think. He cares a lot about me, but... I'm not that important to him, no? It's my father that he needs to thank, not me. I'm just glad that I have a friend.

"Um..." He murmurs. Dean's eyes are aimed forward in bliss, thinking about something.

"Dean," I say, but when he doesn't turn, I just shrug. He's secretly looking at Valla, his love interest and possibly girlfriend. They're pretty close, if you ask me. So it's a pretty big thing for him to hang out back here with me instead (though I think he's forgotten that I exist at the moment).

Up ahead, Larka and Hodor, the famous lovers of Berk, trudge on slowly, hand-in-hand. Larka was a victim of a burn accident in her younger years, and her face is absolutely horrible. No one bothered with her for years (including me, unfortunately) until Hodor, the aggressive but tender redhead, with his muscular body that rivals only Erik's, reached out and became her friend. No one thought that someone as strong as Hodor could be so... kind towards Larka. Or anyone, actually.

"Here, let me help you," Hodor says from up front, holding out a hand to help her cross over a large log.

"Thanks," Larka replies, taking his hand and smiling happily.

We all would've have made fun of this cheeky moment, but of course, Hodor isn't willing to let anyone pick on her with all that she's gone through.

The interesting thing is that no one's ever considered that when it comes to me...

The sun is midway through the sky. The sky is clear, the wind is blowing, and-

"There!" the dimwitted but powerful Trigon yells all of a sudden, pointing to a line of smoke rising into the air off to the west. "They've got one!"

He, with his long blonde hair and metal helmet, takes off instantly towards the fire, leaving us to follow from behind. The teens of the village are split into two groups, one covering the huge east side, and the other the disproportionately small and disconnected west. We're all supposed to signal the other group if we've found a dragon,

so we can all see 'how to kill a dragon' in full detail. Disgusting. The village even has a Book of Dragons describing how to kill each and every, specifically.

It's embarrassing how we even call ourselves humans. If there was a Book of Humans, for dragons, Berk would be on top of their list, with huge, red words "KILL PAINFULLY AND MERCILESSLY" on top, splattered with human blood and all.

But, of course, dragons don't kill unless they absolutely need to. we just force them to do that a lot.

I take off running along with the others, Dean the only one falling behind and letting me catch up. Several times does he slow down and let me catch up, my slim body doing nothing to help me evade the obstacles of the forest. At a tediously high ledge, where the rest are already done climbing, Dean crouches down and holds his hands out in front of him.

"Jump," He says urgently. "Quick, before we lose them."

Having no time to express my gratitude, I place my left foot on his hand. He lifts my leg up, raising my body high enough that I can grab the ledge above. I pull myself up, struggling to climb over on the ledge, when I see another boy holding out his hand to help me up.

"C'mon," his chirpy voice vocalises. "Get a move on."

It's Fyrver, the Outcast of the village. His small and hyperactive traits made him even an outcast to the Outcasts, and we found him not long ago on the shores of Berk along with Fortylle, his guardian and escapee. He's been nice to all of us since, but he's still a troublemaker and absolutely refuses to share his past with the others. He's not exactly my friend, as he likes to stick to Fortylle more, but we can talk. We often do, when Dean is out looking for Valla.

"Thanks," I say, my other hand grabbing his and pulling myself up. He looks at me thoughtfully and leans down to help Dean up as well. Together, we get up and continue after the source of flames that have attracted our group like moths to a bonfire.

"We're late," Dean says, his hair flying madly as we dash through the forestation, the sounds we make loud enough to wake up any stray dragons in the vicinity. Hopefully, there aren't any.

"Not really," Fyrver pipes. "I saw them running towards the fire, but it was put out before they got far. They've slowed down considerably."

Dean raises an eyebrow. Fyrver ruffles his green hair, smiling happily.

Another thing about Fyrver; he likes to roam around a lot, which makes him unreliable, but he always has important (if not juicy) news for us to hear. He likes appearing at random moments and disappearing as he goes. In fact, the longest time that he's ever stayed still with me was when he was sitting down and telling me how he found this giant fish in the sea, which was about 30 minutes straight. I told

him that I didn't believe it, but he just smiled.

After a while, Dean stops, causing us all to cease our running and catches our breaths, and cups one of his ears.

"It's them," he declares casually, having not shed a single sweat at all. "We're nearly there."

Dean's nearly unbounded stamina and powerful sense of hearing has always been a secret to the others, having shown very little physical exertion to the others, often holding back and letting Hordor and Erik to do the more laborious work done, but he's always used it to help me. He says that he 'owes me a lot', but that's a lie. He wants to repay my father's debt onto me- something that I have been more than once appreciated and several more times felt guilty for. He doesn't need to hold himself down for me, and I certainly don't want him to, but that's what he wants. He could have been another legend of the village with his enormous amounts of energy but yet lean body, but no, he's decided to help the hiccup of the village.

Sometimes I wonder if my father put him up to it. I would never forgive him if that's true.

After pausing for another few minutes, we resume walking towards our party. We reach them after a considerable amount of time- Fyrver having once again disappeared into the woods.

I sigh. Apart from Dean, he's one of the only few people who enjoy talking to me. If he wasn't just so full of wanderlust and secrecy, we would've been good friends.

"Hey, it's Useless!" Trigon says, being at the back of the group. Absolutely only one person bothers to look back, and that's Larka. She looks genuinely concerned for me, but like everyone else, says nothing to me.

Or it isn't concern. Maybe it was pity, or maybe even spite. She has Hordor; what else does she need? Why would she care for someone like me? I see nothing logical for an answer.

Aesis, leading the front, calls to tell us (except for me) that she's found the group. We begin walking faster, eager to see the dragon and how it's going to die.

Except for me, of course. And maybe Dean, but he's always kept his opinions a secret. I strongly suspect that he's been training just to get better and not kill. He could snap anyone's neck whenever he wanted, but his unpopularity with the group (for siding with me) doesn't seem to be enough to tick him off. Most just ignore him, like he does to them.

You don't talk to someone you don't have anything to talk about with.

"Hey, guys!" Sethi waves at us as we approach her and her group. "We found a dragon hiding in a cave down there, and it doesn't look like it's going anywhere soon."

Her group, consisting of 3 females and only one male, is now laughing

joke. Playful and colorfully green as she is, she is a deadly viking-and a leader. She can even wrestle with Erik, but you know, the males and the females of the village dislike unfair play. But, of course, this doesn't apply to them when it comes to me.

Naral, Trigon's equally blonde cousin and Spraak, the bookworm of the village, sides either side of her. Naral, the lighter of the fire, hastily explains to us that she accidentally put in too much wood, causing the flames to die down. Spraak holds out the Book of Dragons in his hands, his overgrown size matching only his overgrown knowledge of reading and the burning passion that comes with it.

"There you are, Fyrver!" Fortylle's voice rings out, running up to the much smaller boy as he appears from the bushes nearby. They hug for a second, and when they pull out, Fryver does not leave her side. Fortylle is the like a big sister to him, the two being inseparable in all aspects. Her brown hair contrasting deeply with Fryver's green, her cunning with his playfulness, it seems hard that the two would ever fit. But they do.

Spraak opens the Book of Dragons and flips to the bookmarked page, everyone else leaning in for a closer look.

"The dragon's a Nadder," he says. "The best way to kill it is to hide in its blind spot, which is in front of its eyes, and then blind it from there on."

I stumble backwards from the semicircle, retching loudly in disgust. Surprisingly, I'm not the only one. Fyrver is sprawled out on the ground, eyes wide in horror.

"Excuse me? We blind the thing first?" he says, Fortylle immediately by his side and helping him up. "Isn't killing the dragon bad enough?"

"How else are we supposed to get close enough to kill it, then?" Aesis snaps, rounding on the smaller boy. Erik and Hodor nod in agreement, while the others look at each other with uncertainty. They do not want to cross Aesis.

"You could shoot it from a distance," Fortylle suggests, standing up defiantly. I get up and dust myself off quietly, watching the events unfold.

"We don't have bows. Besides, those are for cowards," she says coolly.

She glares at me directly at this.

"We can do the blinding and you can help us with the killing, alright?" Sethi says, stepping in between the two. Dean is already behind Aesis in case she decides to pick a fight. "You won't have to see the Nadder before it's blinded that way."

I look between the two girls, one my crush and one not my crush. Their eyes slowly meet after several seconds of silence, and they nod at the same time, reaching an unspoken agreement. I'm never going to understand girls.

Aesis is the first to break eye contact. "Alright, then," She says. "You sit back and we'll do the Viking stuff, and you can help us when it comes to killing."

The rest of the group nods. They begin towards the cave accordingly to Spraak's instructions.

I stand back, and Dean does not move either. We sit next to Fyrver and Fortylle, their eyes locking onto mine and nodding in recognition.

"It's horrible," Fortylle says. "I thought Outcast Island was bad, but this is..."

"...Crazy," Fyrver finishes, tears in his eyes. "They actually \_enjoy\_ killing dragons."

I nod. "If we don't do it," I explain, "My father will send us away from the isle. We have to do this, whether we like it or not."

Dean looks at my comprehendingly. "Larka doesn't like it either, but she's going because Hodor is," he adds.

We sit down and wait for them to finish their act of evil, the wind blowing softly towards their direction, as if to taunt us. "Do it, cowards," it calls. "Be a Viking."

"...Haston?" Fyrver says, looking at me. "Why is your father like that?"

I pause, not really knowing why either. It is Dean who answers the question for me.

"Dragons have raided this place for eons," he says. "The people think that dragons are evil."

I feel yet another rush of gratitude towards Dean and his most recent statement.

"They just take what they need, right?" Fortylle asks. We nod.

"Why can't we just lay food \_for\_ them so won't have to raid us?" Fyrver asks.

We all look at each other silently, thinking about what had not been thought before.

"Hey! That sounds like a good idea!" I say, getting up.

"That is," Dean says, following suit. "We should go tell the Chief now so they can call off the killing. If we're quick, we might not have to kill!"

"Yeah," Fyrver says, getting up as well. Fortylle looks at us anxiously.

"Go," she says. "I'll tell them where you guys went."

We're all about to take off for the village when we hear a loud voice from behind me.

"OI! Guys! We blinded it!" Trigon calls, appearing from the distance. "Come here and kill it!"

I look at Dean, disappointment filled in both of our eyes. There is no way we're going to tell Father now, especially with the dragon in custody and that Trigon knows.

We turn around, following him silently. I hear Fyrver and Fortylle walking behind us.

"Shoot," I mutter. "We were so close." Dean nods.

**\*\*R\*\***

We're in the cave, all of us. The dragon lays at mercy at our feet, its eye sockets empty its toothed mouth bounded heavily. It has no clear traces of blood except for the ones running out of its sockets. I hear it groan quietly in pain. Its wings have gaping holes in them, which is the reason why it could not leave this cave. Both legs are locked to the ground behind it, signs of struggle evident on the cave's ground. I resist the urge to run outside.

"Here it is," Erik says proudly. "Took us awhile to keep get its big mouth shut."

I hear Fortylle whimpering behind me. Dean sides her and whispers something to her.

"Alright, guys, here's what we do," Aesis says, handing us a knife each. It takes several moments for the pale-faced Fyrver to accept his, but he does without comment. "We all stab at some part of it, but Valla is going to stab its heart."

The group nods, taking positions around the downed Nadder. Fyrver and Fortylle move in front of the wings, where it will probably hurt the least. I hear the dragon whimper, as if it knows what will happen next.

"Such a colorful thing..." Hodor taunts. "Red will be a good addition to your hues."

"Finally, after all this time..." Naral says. "We're going to kill our first dragon."

Aesis raises her knife high up, viciousness glinting madly in her eyes.

"Alright... on the count of three, we stab it, alright?" She says.

"Yeah," we all say, Dean's being the quietest.

"Three..." We raise our knives.

"Two..." Some of us hesitate, some of us look eager.

"ONE!" We all bring our knives down with incredible force.



\_Splurch\_\_.\_

Blood courses from all parts of the dragon where the knives entered, its screech of pain clearly hearable throughout the whole cave like the sound of nails rubbing against slate, despite being so fully bound and silenced. As the last of the sound dies down, the blood stops coursing. I quickly remove my knife from its leg, chucking the killing away from me and the killed. It ends on the floor with a \_clang\_\_, and I soon follow, my hands on the ground, my stomach fighting to not release its contents. Dean kneels next to me silently, his knife nowhere to be seen, his face nonchalant.

"Hah!" Trigon says, pulling his knife out with a soft \_sliiick\_. Naral mutters something happy.

"We... did it," Sethi says, looking at her work, face expressionless. Hodor hoots in delight.

"I... I killed a dragon..." Fyver moans, also discarding his killing weapon, looking for a place to wipe his hands. "I... killed..." Fortylle's face is grave.

Valla removes the knife from its heart quietly. No. \_Her\_ heart. This Nadder had a gender... had freedom... had \_life\_\_\_. We killed something that was unable to fight back, some\_one\_ that never did anything to harm us. This thing may have had a family. She might have had someone she loved dearly. She was just waiting for its wings to heal, and we took that away... we took her eyesight away... we killed her.

"Alright!" Aesis says, looking at us all with a sense of victory. Why do I like this girl, again? "Now, Useless, go call on your father and tell him that you slayed a dragon with all of us."

I get up shakily, Dean looking at me grimly. "O-OK," I say, walking towards the cave's entrance.

Suddenly, the cave begins shaking violently, as if an earthquake had struck the isle. Rocks begin falling from above, Erik losing his balance and falling to the ground. Larka screams.

"Everyone! Get out of the cave!" Sethi's commanding voice rings out. We all start for the entrance, but as we do, the floor below us cracks, the roof caving in.

We're going down. I look for Fyver and Dean, and see them falling into the abyss below already. Only Aesis and I have not fallen, and for a second, I see fear registered on her face as she looks for the dead dragon.

It's not there.

Only the chains and massive cloth that silenced it remains.

And that's the last thing I see before I fall into the darkness below, everything blacking out.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>AN: If you've figured out who most of the characters are,

good for you.\*\*

\*\*A/N: For those who hate me now because of this story, be assured that you will hate me even more as you commence through the story.\*\*

\*\*If you guys are REALLY fed up with who is who, because I'm not descriptive enough, here's a cheatsheet for SOME of the characters:\*\*

\*\*Haston- Hiccup\*\*

\*\*Dean- Toothless (as a human, NOT anthro)\*\*

\*\*Aesis- Astrid\*\*

\*\*Fyrver- a dragon you saw in Riders of Berk. If you didn't see that show, here's a reason to.\*\*

## 2. Tomb of the Sinners

\*\*Warning: Gore and death up ahead! If you don't like those, leave.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Those who sin shall suffer.<strong>

\*\*DEAN\*\*

\_Haston\_\_!\_

\_Valla\_\_!\_

\_Fyrver\_\_!\_

Argh...

Where am I? My head is spinning... What happened?

My eyes open slowly, the smell of the cave looming stronger than ever. I find myself lying on the floor of a cave, a cave connected to a series of other caves that appear to be inside a mountain. There are torches lined up all over the place, most of them unlit, but several are still burning.

I get up and dust myself. Where am I?

"Haston? Fyrver? Valla?" I call, but my voice only echoes off the cave walls. This isn't looking good at all. C'mon, think! Where am I? I've never seen this place before. How did we...?

Oh. No... We killed that dragon, didn't we? And then the floor started collapsing on itself... the others must be around here, then. Maybe they're under some rubble or something...

I take the opportunity to search the cave. In fact, it looks more like a room, with long, straight walls that lead to the outside,

where the 'halls' lie. Beyond that are other rooms that I cannot see into. This place must be huge.

"Haston?" I call, hoping someone will hear me. The cave's pitch blackness gives me its eerie silence in response.

I try and take a torch from the one of the locks, but it's stuck like a model. Its fire seems to be running on something else rather than wood, as the wood below it is not consumed at all by the flames above it. The color itself is an creepy red... much like blood.

No, I can't think like that, can I? I'm Dean, Haston's guardian. I have to find him and the others and get the hell out of here. They've got to be here somewhere, right?

\_Clang\_\_!\_

The sound of breaking glass from behind me resonates loudly from the darkness. I spin around, aiming my torch to find the source of the sound, and see a glass frame fallen from a table to the floor, its glass shattered and lying in pieces, its contents still intact.

I pick up the picture, but the second I do, the ground starts shaking again.

"GAH!" I yell, gripping the nearby table for support, but in the confusion, I drop the picture. It crashes loudly against the floor, though doing nothing to end the rumbling sound of the angry earth below.

The earthquake continues for some time, sending some debris from the ceiling to the ground. After a few minutes, the ground stops shaking. I look around and inspect the damage. It seems that nothing has caved in... hopefully.

To my shock, several of the unlit torches light up, illuminating the room at random places, revealing what was hidden before. I see several more tables, and finally, at the end of the room, a strong board made of slate.

Is this... a classroom?

I pick up the picture again. It's a picture of two girls, both with brown hair, laughing and hugging each other. They don't look like siblings, but they're close.

Another torch lights up, and this time, I can see someone lying on the floor, their body facing up, only the hair visible from how the tables block my sight.

Light blue hair. Locks.

"Valla!" I yell, running towards her, hastily knocking over several tables in the process. "Valla!"

Valla's unconscious body lies on the floor, illuminated by the single torch that seems isolated from the other lit torches in the room. Her dandelion yellow shirt and blue skirt makes her look like a sleeping cheerleader.

"Valla!" I call, shaking her. "Get up!"

She doesn't move. I check her blood pressure, and she has no pulse.

"No! Valla! Come to me!" I yell, horror creeping in on me. I begin shaking her even harder. "Don't-"

"Mmmhuh?" Valla's cheerful voice sounds, her eyes fluttering open slowly. Her pulse seems to be coming back, by the way she's breathing.

"Valla!" I say, sighing in relief. "You're OK!"

"Yeah, I am, Dean..." she says slowly, looking up at me, dazed and confused. "Where are we? The cave?"

"We're in a cave," I say, helping her up. "But... not the same cave where we killed the dragon."

She sweeps her eyes across the room, her hand put across her forehead to help her see better.

"It looks like an old classroom," she says, pointing to one of the broken tables. "These look really, really, old."

"Yeah..." I say, walking to the front of the room, where the board stands. Valla follows me curiously.

"Dean, where are the others?" she asks. "All I remember was putting that knife into that dragon..."

I shoot her a look, but she only looks at me honestly.

"We had to do what we had to do. You know Aesis," she says, shaking her head. "I just didn't know that the whole cave would... cave in."

"None of us did," I say, inspecting the board. It's mostly empty, but the chalk littered at the holder suggests that it was written on recently. I trace the thin chalk line to a small corner of the board. There are small, shaking runes inscribed on it, almost as if it was painstakingly written.

LEAVE

The room suddenly feels colder. Valla hands me something from behind with her tender, kind hands.

"Look at this," she says. "I found it under one of the tables."

It's a notebook, its cover roughed and ripped in parts, a faded out name written underneath but completely incomprehensible. The pages are so brittle that they look like they will disintegrate on touch. I open the book, and Valla steps closer to take a look.

The handwriting inside is far more readable than the front.

WOODEN WEAPONS- \_RT 1

Sword- Long, \_turdy, and con\_ve. One blow will usually k\_ someone out fo\_ \_urs. Non-fa\_ on hit. Used in tra\_ing. Unsuitable for combat.

Disk- Small, dura\_. Used to disarm \_ers from a distance with its \_bility. Non-fatal. Seldom seen \_ \_bat.

Bow- Accompanied \_ \_ arrow. Used\_ \_t from a safe d\_t\_. Arrow is \_th\_. Comm\_y seen in \_.

The rest is completely ripped from the lower half of the page.

"Hm," I say, flipping through the rest of the pages. "Metal weapons, Fire, Melee, Ranged."

"It looks like someone was learning something from this class," she says, ducking under other tables and checking their contents as well.

"Yeah..." I say, closing the book shut. "This was a classroom before it... broke down, I guess."

I look at Valla as she ducks her head down, her locks swaying softly as she bobs her head curiously in search for other school notebooks. Her perfect sky blue hair has always been a wonder to me; how does she keep it that way, compared to my black and messy own? I've always thought that she was kind of cute, at any rate. I mean, locks, hair, happy face all the time, jokes, and, well, she's not that mean towards Haston. I just wished she knew how I felt...

"EEK!" She yells, pulling her hand out of one the desks quickly in fright. I'm by her side instantly, her breathing hitching slightly in fright. I look into the desk, but it's too dark to see anything inside properly.

"What the..." I say, pushing it slightly so the light can illuminate it properly.

The contents of the table are smeared in blood, its stickiness leeching onto a single notebook laid in there. It looks very recent, given its texture and sturdiness. I pull it out slowly, causing Valla to back off.

"That thing's... covered in... blood..." she says, shaking.

"It... is," I say, looking at the book in disgust. "Yuck. Who would coat a desk with \_blood\_\_?\_"

I decide to take a look inside the book, having already retrieved it from where it was.

"Eh..."

The pages are fresh and empty, save for one, which is completely stained in blood, written slowly but shakily.

DON'T WANT TO DIE

PLEASE

BLOOD EVERYWHERE

CAN'T MOVE LEGS

The rest of the runes are too covered with blood to read.

"This... looks like its been written by a psychopath," I conclude. "Who the hel would smear blood all over the interiors of a table and then write on only one page of a notebook?"

Valla steps up and looks at the book closer.

"There's a name," she says, pointing out a small runic word at the back of the notebook.

BJERGSON- VILLAGE OF KREA

"Krea? Never heard of it," I say. "Do you?"

She shakes her head. "No," she answers.

I put the notebook back where it originally came from, my hands careful to avoid the gruesome blood the litters the desk.

"Let's get out of here," I say. "There's gotta be a way out."

"Y-yeah," Valla says, brushing her locks softy. "This place doesn't look anywhere like it's near home, either."

We head towards the door. After shifting around some chairs, the pathway to the hall looks good enough to pass. We leave the room swiftly, determined to find a way out.

"Hey, Dean..." Valla asks as we walk down the hall. There are no people, yet the torches are lit and the hallway is very bright. To our sides, there are rooms here and there, but there is too much debris blocking to actually enter them. Strewn along the hallway, we find traces of blood here and there, and occasionally a stain smeared across the wall by someone's hand.

"Hm?" I ask, determined not to look at the walls- especially after passing one part that had this written on the wall, painted by blood:

NOT SAFE

"...Why don't you talk to the group much?" she asks. I growl silently at her question, but answer it anyway. It's better than thinking of the situation at hand.

"Because they like to hurt Haston," I say. "I can't accept that."

She smirks, her happy instanct taking control once again. "Yeah? And what's it with ya and Haston? Ya like each other?"

"No!" I say, hurt staining my eyes. "He's my friend. I'm the only friend he has. He helped me go through the earlier parts of my life..."

"Oh," she says, looking at me curiously. "How was your life before, then?"

I shift uncomfortably. "Well, I didn't really know my parents at all..." I begin. "They found me in front of their house one day. I was... taken in."

She raises an eyebrow. "Really?" she asks.

I nod. "Haston treated me like he treated no one else. He played with me like he was my brother. He took care of me when I cried, and he was always by my side. He never left me." A lump appears in my throat because of nostalgia. While the others picked on him and laughed at his mistakes, I stood by his side and comforted him. I... still do."

"You two make a pretty good duo," she comments. "His intelligence and your strength turns out to be pretty powerful."

I face her, my eyes slit. "Since when have you ever noticed him?" I ask.

She faces me, rubbing the back of her head in thought. "Well, I know that he's smart and all, because I've seen him writing and drawing sometimes. He's friendly towards me, you know."

I nod, a rush of gratitude rising in me. "People just don't get him," I say.

"Yeah, maybe- AAH!" she screams, jumping in fear.

I instinctively pull her back, shielding her with one arm.

There's a corpse blocking the hallway, his skeleton being the only remainder of the male he was. His clothes are ripped and there's a huge fracture in his head, suggesting that he died from a concussive blow to the head. His body seems dried, but there are remains of blood on his clothes and the floor around him. His body is lying face down. His arms are in awkward angles, as if he broke them either on impact with the ground or earlier before his demise.

"What... the..." I say. "What kind of place is this?!"

"It's a corpse... it's a real corpse..." Valla whimpers from behind me.

I turn to face her, holding her hands softly. This is not what I expected. Blood, fine. But death... no. We've got to get out of here.

"We'll find some other route. Let's go-" I begin.

"EE!" She screams, pointing to my back. I spin around and see-

"So you are the new lambs."

-A blue-white, misty, and very corporeal ghost of the boy that had died. His flame of life seems to be the only thing allowing him to communicate to... us, his form swaying with the nonexistent

wind.

"Who are you?!" I yell, stepping away from him. The ghost does not move, as if he is attached to his body. I notice that the ghost's arms are missing, and his head is replaced by something foggy and blue. He looks to be of our age, judging from his build, if not older.

"I am a victim here," he says eerily. "I was sent here with someone else while trying to kill a dragon."

I stare at him. "You... killed a dragon as well?" I ask.

"Yes," he says. "I was in a cave with someone else. We were looking for dragons to kill, and..."

"And?" I ask, raising my eyebrows. Seemingly, this ghost doesn't look too bad. He might even be a valuable source of information.

"I... woke up in here. There are many dangers here, and I was unlucky enough to be caught by one..." he says resignedly. "A giant man appeared and killed me. You've seen my body."

"W... why would anyone do that? Do this?\_" Valla asks, stepping forward.

The ghost shakes his head.

"I don't know. All I do is that this place is cursed with ghosts and evils. You and several other people were sent here upon killing a dragon..." he says.

Valla looks at me in delight. "You hear that?" She asks. "The others are here too! We should go find them-"

"I'm afraid that's not possible," the male ghost cuts in.

"What?!" I say in outrage, balling up my fists. "Why not?!"

"This cave is a system of worlds that are separated from each other entirely," he says. "You may be in the same cave, but in a different world. You may never meet."

Valla turns back to him. "Of course we'll meet! What makes you think that we won't?" she snaps, throwing her hair behind her and glaring in defiance. "We're going to find our friends and we're going to get outta here!"

The ghost nods, but I can tell he's only doing this to encourage us.

"Well... good luck. The best path to survival is together," he says. "I wish you all good luck."

"Yeah. Thanks," I say, nodding. The ghost disappears into the air, but the corpse does not. He does, however, leave a small crest lying next to his head, reading:

BRUTALIET- VILLAGE OF HAPER



"He was a boy... he looked young..." Valla says, turning to face me, her face determined. "We're not going to end up that way."

"No, we're not," I assure her. "Let's go."

We carefully tread around his corpse, not wanting to step on a dead body, especially one whose ghostly fire still remains so strongly here.

"Rest in peace," Valla whispers to him before turning her back on the ghost.

**\*\*VALLA\*\***

The place is huge. We've been through the whole hall and there isn't a single thing that indicates this place's identity. It's just a long corridor of corpses, blood, and gore. I had to hold Dean's hand on several occasions to hold myself together, including one particular one time that I actually stepped on a freaking human hand! It was bones and all, but I screamed!

Dean is really nice, though. I've never seen this part of him before. Usually he just skulks around and stays with Haston, but he can be a great guy at points. He is brave, confident, and... witty. He knows how to remove obstacles swiftly, and he seems to know where he's going, even if we both don't have a clue.

After walking on, we come across a staircase that leads to the first floor. I'm quick to notice that there are two sharp nails protruding the wall beside the stars, as if they were put there in reverse. I tell Dean, and he just says to be careful about it.

We reach the first floor, and as we do, I see a small light at the end of the tunneled hall.

"Hey, that looks like the entrance..." Dean says, eyeing the mouth of the cave in the distance with great concentration.

"Really?!" I ask, jumping in delight. "We'll be free now!"

We begin sprinting towards the exit, my heart lifting with every step we take.

The entrance is wide open, like the mouth of a cave, and rain pouring outside everywhere. I see trees in the distance. We must be in a huge mountain. I can hear the sound of rain already.

I look to Dean, who is smiling madly. "Ready?" I ask.

He nods. "Yep."

"Let's... go!" I say, running to the exit.

We stop short of the edge, and I nearly slip and fall over. The edge stops just there, and there is nothing below to stop the fall. The woods like they go on forever, and...

"Huh? There's no ledge below!" I say. Dean holds my hand tightly.

"Holy..." Dean mutters, pointing downwards. "Look at that."

I look down and immediately jump back from the edge in horror. There are several corpses of people who have fallen to their deaths from the incredibly horizontal edge down there. Their bodies are scattered a ways down, and there are just so many that I can't count.

Above me, a torch goes out. I jump, and, for some reason, run into Dean's arms.

What the hel?! I'm not supposed to be doing this!

"Er... sorry," I say, stepping away from him and blushing. "Didn't mean.. to do that..."

Dean smiles indifferently. "You're easily scared, aren't you?" He jokes.

I flush. "Am not!\_" I say, stepping towards him.

He smirks. "Am too," he says. "Didn't you hold my hand back there earlier?"

"You idiot!\_" I say blushing even harder, but I smirk too. "You can be kinda funny, actually."

He seems to not care that we're stuck in a cursed cave full of corpses.

"What did you see me as, a sad and unhumorous guy who lives in the shadows of someone else?" he asks, grinning.

"Heh..." I begin, turning around back towards the stairs. "Let's go the other way. We might find something else there."

"Sure," he says.

I lead the way back, tracing our steps and looking for a source of portable light.

"What happened to your parents, Dean?" I ask, hoping to pass the time on something more interesting than blood and death. I pass another corpse who is slumped along the wall, her body limp and battered from repeated slams to her body. She's in a state of decay, her clothes still new, but her body rotten.

"They left," Dean says evasively. "Somewhere."

"As in, another village?" I ask.

"As in, does it matter?" Dean says, annoyed. "They aren't here. They never were."

My face falls, and I make a mental note to never ask him that again.

"Ok, sorry," I say sincerely, touching his shoulder. "It's not like I knew my mother either..."

My mother was killed on a dragon raid. She was throwing axes at them,

and they just blasted her down. That was all I ever heard from my father about the subject. It's weird how so many axes she threw, and how little they actually hurt the dragons, and how it only took one flame blast to do her in. I was so young, but I cried when she wasn't with me that night.

"I guess so," he says. "Vikings see losses as medals of honors, anyway."

I shove that thought out of my mind.

"Say, Dean," I begin, "Who do you have it in for you?"

This is a friendly question that I have in mind to light up the mood.

"Who I- what?" he says, doubling over.

"Who do you like?" I ask, smiling. "You must like \_someone\_."

"I-I- I don't-" he sputters. This is the first time I've seen him nervous, actually. Even in this accursed place, he's been so calm and, at most, loud. Never nervous.

We're climbing the stairs back to the second floor. I snap my fingers, as if I've made an amazing discovery.

"Oh, is it Aesis?" I ask, poking at his stomach. "She seems like a good match to your strength."

"N-no!" he says, blushing madly. I giggle.

"Oh, so you \_do\_ like her," I joke. Gotcha!

"I- I- I like-" he begins, but never gets the chance to finish it.

"AH!" I shriek in fright as I step on something that sounds a lot like... \_intestines\_\_?\_

"Valla! Look!" Dean yells, pointing to the wall directly next to us. I wheel around and nearly throw up.

There's a corpse tied to the wall of the hallway, its innards sprawled out onto the floor and hanging from the stomach. There are no visible clothes, but by judging the build of the body, this was a female body of our age. There is nothing but flesh and guts, the arms tacked into the wall with the two nails from earlier, the rest of the body hanging down and out, the head missing and the legs ripped from the body. Blood is splattered everywhere along the wall behind and below the body, suggesting that it was launched here with great force from somewhere, obliterating the head on impact, the body mutilated with sharp objects immediately after, and the whole thing hanging there from the wall by the nails that have pierced into the walls digging into the hands of the victim. The intestines and liver are sprawled about on the floor, the heart and the lungs hanging out from the chest, connected by a few perilously thin blood vessel, blood still flowing out from the tubes. There is no visible crest or identification.

"F... this wasn't here a while ago," Dean says, backing away from the wall in shock.

"It... wasn't," I say, holding on to Dean tightly as he slowly pulls me away, my own body in too much shock to be able to do anything.

"Valla! C'mon, get a hold of yourself!" he says, still dragging me by the shoulders, my eyes refusing to tear away from the destroyed body on the wall.

Those nails were there for a reason. They knew what was going to happen there.

But, \_who\_\_?\_

My body fades out and everything goes to black from shock.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>AN: I'm not a psychopath! Well, not by the long shot. Thank goodness I have a terrible imagination.  
><strong>

\*\*Well, there isn't anymore to the cheatsheet as of now, but you should be able to guess who Valla is by now if you've read my other stories.\*\*

### 3. The Broken Shatter

\*\*Warning: Massive character death in this chapter!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>In <strong>\*\*unity\*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*there \*\*\*\*is \*\*\*\*discord\*\*\*\*.\*\*

\*\*In \*\*\*\*discord\*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*there \*\*\*\*is \*\*\*\*death\*\*\*\*.\*\*

\*\*Dean\*\*

"Valla!" I yell, shaking her roughly. "Valla!"

"Hn... Dean?" Valla says sleepily, her blue hair a mess as she lies on the bed.

"Valla!" I say, sighing with relief. "Dammit, I was worried sick!"

The infirmary's dim light illuminates only a portion of the room, the part where we are now, whereas the other torches are completely out, leaving their respective parts in darkness. This room is at the midway between the classroom we found ourselves in and the \_other\_ side of the hall, a part that was supposed to be caved in before, but is now seemingly rid of any obstacles that may have impeded the progress in coming in. Carrying Valla and trying not to trip on any of the corpses (the male one from earlier is, surprisingly, \_gone\_) is a hard task, but it isn't so hard when you know a friend's sanity

is at stake.

I made sure to scout out for any more corpses, to which I found two in separate parts of the cavern room, their bodies not in the best shape ever (but certainly better than the one we just saw) and dragged them outside so Valla wouldn't panic. Handling the corpses was like torture; I tried my best not to stare into their dead, cold eyes as they were hauled out one by one, but it looked like they were intent in staring into mine- It was as if their empty eyes could kill me with a murderous stare, their pupils asking, Did\_ \_you\_ \_kill\_ \_me\_? with contempt and hate. Their arms were cold, lifeless, and easily shattered. They looked like they may have been caring and skillful, but in death, arms are arms, and they feel cold.

It's so much easier to see Valla with this new light, but I don't think she sees anything in me anyway.

"Dean?" Valla mutters. She opens her eyes slowly, letting the dark cave engulf her eye's view as she slowly gets up, her legs swinging down the bed. "Ow..."

"You alright?" I ask, watching as she looks at her arms and legs quickly, making sure that she wasn't injured or hurt.

"My head is still spinning a bit, but I guess I'm alright," she says.

"Here," I say, handing her a blanket that I found in the cabinets earlier. "There might be some blood on it, though."

Valla looks at the blanket for a while, staring into it like it had the answers to our presence in this accursed place. I wish it did.

"Weâ€¦ we saw thatâ€¦ that thing..." she says quietly.

I nod. The bloody mess on the wall was something so quick, so horrible, so gory, that even I nearly threw up. I don't get it. We had about a 10 minute timespan between each stair crossing. How the hell did that appearâ€¦?

Who was it? Was it someone we knewâ€¦?

No. There's no wayâ€¦

"It could have died in any way," she says, clutching the blanket tightly despite its bloody stains. "Why in such an awful way?"

"Iâ€¦ don't know," I say, not really knowing what to say to comfort her, for anything that's untrue could be used against us in the future. I don't want to get her hopes up, but I don't want to completely destroy it either.

"T-thatâ€¦ could have been anyone we knew..." she says fearfully. So unlike the energetic and lively Valla I've always known. "There wasn't any crest or anything, was there?"

"No," I say, not knowing if this will help or hurt her. "There wasn't."

She starts crying all of a sudden, the sheets wettening as she presses her gentle cheeks across the rough texture of the worn out blanket.

I don't know what I was thinking, but I sit next to her on the bed, and she hugs me tightly, sobbing into my shoulder.

Her arms are so tender around my neck, her hair falling into perfect array as she shakes slightly with each sob that rocks her body, her soft face buried into my arm's top joint, her quiet cries as she cries ever so fearfully, releasing it with each rack of feelings as she pours it all out to me.

I've never seen Valla so beautiful before. I don't know why, but her timidity underneath her unbounded joy is something that give some hope. I can protect her. I can save her from anything that comes in, and she'll come into my arms and cry.

It feels so wrong to even think about it, but I obviously don't care.

"Valla," I say softly. "It's ok. You're safe."

She sobs quietly at these words, but I can feel a definite improvement over the awkwardness that hung over us recently. Not to mention that I held her and everythingâ€¦

After a short while, she comes out of her breakdown, smiling at me happily.

"You're just so strong, you know, Dean?" she says, looking into my black eyes intently. "You never break down, and you're always there to stop the crying. You're awesome."

My face blushes heavily at this, but I try my best to hide it.

"I..." I say, rubbing the back of my head and smiling. "Thanks."

She smiles and huffs loudly, turning away from me.

"You don't mean it," she says teasingly. "You like Aesis."

"No, I don't," I say, glaring at her, ending whatever mushiness I felt while helping her. "Stupid idiot likes to pick on Haston."

"Everyone does," she says flatly, getting up and surveying the room. "Except you."

"Fyrver doesn't," I shoot back, her yellow shirt striking with the dark background pretty horribly. Why must she have such a strong sense of clothes? Is it girlish stuff that happens with every damn female? I wish they could just pick a set of clothes and wear that all year, like my trademark black tunic, black shoes, which matches with my black eyes and hair perfectly. It's this ability to lay in silence and watch Valla from a ways away that has made me so evasive and possibly dangerous, even though I probably would mean well (unless they didn't). Colorful clothes just make you an easier target

to all this crazy stuff happening around here.

"Well, I'd rather let you know that he doesn't pick on anyone, because he's younger than all of us, and-"

"Fortylle is older, but she doesn't seem to care much about hurting my friend like you do."

The comment makes Valla wheel back around to face me, and, shockingly, with a \_smile\_ on her face.

"I don't \_pick\_ on him," she says sweetly. "It's you and your overprotectiveness that likes to think otherwise."

I glare, but her smile forces me to drop it.

"Fine," I say, getting up. "This appears to be a bedroom of some sorts. It's really big, so I recommend you don't go in too far. I've been through most of it, but I'm not sure if there's anything else not dangerous at this point."

She turns around, holding up a piece of wood.

"We'll find out, shall we?" she says, lighting the wood with the torch. It catches and burns merrily in the fading dark.

"Hm," I say, looking at a new part of room that I hadn't seen before.

Most of the room is present to our eyes now. The room is a rectangular box with only one door. I can read the letters "IN D\_O WE TRUST" painted in loud, \_red\_ letters at the far side of the room, paint dripping from it as if it was recently painted with something \_horribly\_ red. There's a small desk to the corner of the far side, its lighting torch extinguished and the chair seems to be overturned. I see another corpse in the room that I hadn't seen before; a grey haired boy with velvet clothes. He looked like he came from a rich class of families, far from Berk and out culture.

"My..." Valla says, her mouth twitching as she's forced to look away.

I walk up to the corpse slowly, wondering if it carries any sort of clues to what's happening, and why this has all ended up like this. I see a small notebook to his left leg, but on closer inspection, someone has pierced it with a knife, which seems to be drawn from the side of his leg, the blood stains on the ground very strongly visible and gruesome. His head lies facing the wall, so I can't see it properly, but it looks like his hands very forcibly tried to move it towards some other direction before giving in.

I pull the knife out of the notebook, a loud \_shick\_ resonating through the dark as the knife separates from the brown, decorative book.

"It's a diary," Valla says, looking at the book.

"Looks like he wrote something in here, too," I say, opening the pages gingerly.

"Lunchtime with Rokl," I read, turning the pages slow enough so I can read their entireties before moving on to the next page. This looks like a very normal series of entries of this person before he ended up in here.

As soon as I reach about halfway through the skimming, the page freezes suddenly and I can't turn it. In fact, the whole book is frozen, its contents feeling a whole lot heavier as its now-bricklike structure has seemed to alter the paper's nature.

"What theâ€¦ hell?" I say, wringing the book with my hands. "I can't move it!"

"Dad,\_" a voice appears from the book. "I want to go home.\_"

"What theâ€¦?" Valla says, looking at it.

"I don't want to stay here, Dad. There is too much death here. You only said that we'd hunt a dragon down. I wasn't expecting this. I've seen so many corpses that my head is spinning. I don't want to end up like them, dad. What do I do?\_"

"The entry of the diary is reading itself," I say quietly.

"Dad, if you're in this place like I am, I want to let you know that this place is cursed. I read from an article that this place used to be controlled by humans, until dragons came in and destroyed the place. If you die here, you can't go back.\_"

"I don't want to die, dad. I'm scared.\_"

The voice stops there. The book resumes its original state, flopping uselessly in my hand, the pages now able to be turned again.

"See what's in there," Valla says. I nod, opening the next page cautiously.

Instead of the neat handwriting that dominated the earlier majority of the pages, the rest of them are painstakingly written, its contents horribly crooked and distorted.

D \*\*A\*\*D

\*\*I\*\*W A\*\*N\*\* T TO S E\*\*E\*\* YO UA\*\*G\*\* \*\*A\*\*IN

G H O-

The rest of the word is not there. It was as if he was writing this after being repeatedly stabbed in the leg, here in the bedroom, but he never made it to finish the word.

"Ghost," Valla says. "Corpses, blood, death, human organs, and now ghosts."



"Don't worry," I say, dropping the notebook back on the floor, its back cover reading

SORFET- Eskan

and horribly stained in his own blood. "We'll find a way out of here."

She nods solemnly. "Yeah, we will."

Suddenly, a scream echoes through the room, despite the door being locked shut and the whole place totally silent.

\*\*\*FYRVER\*\*\*!\*\*\*

I stare at Valla in shock, and she stares right back.

"That was Fortylle's voice," I say uneasily.

"Yeah, and it sounded close too," Valla adds.

"I'm going to go have a look," I say, turning around.

"So am I," she says, following me. I nod.

We leave the room quickly, intent on finding the source of the noise. However, before we're able to leave, the door locks itself shut- from the \_inside\_\_.

"What the hell?!" I yell, pounding at the door as Valla unsuccessfully tries to pick at the lock.

"We're trapped," she says, her voice panicking. "We're trapped."

I look around the room and see something manifesting in the corner.

"Oh, hell," I mutter.

\*\*VALLA\*\*

"What is \_that\_\_?" I whisper, staring at the red glowing light above the corpse. Suddenly, all the torches go out, and the only thing lighting the room is my own and the red orb-like thing, its flames swirling around in a perfect circle, never leaving its perimeter.

"It looks like a ghost," he says, shielding me from its view. "Keep on picking the lock."

I frantically stick a piece of wood into the metallic works, moving it around at delicate angles in hope that it will find its mark soon. There's not enough light to actually \_see\_ its contents, but I have a feeling that this is a big lock.

A scream erupts from the corner of the room and I see everything flash red for a moment.

"Valla!" he yells, moving away from me slightly and towards the spirit. "Get it done! Quickly!"

"I'm trying!" I say, repeatedly shoving the stick in, but it breaks.  
"Dammit!"

"It's coming this way!" he says, picking up a piece of metal and handing it this way. "Hurry!"

I look at the lock carefully. Its interiors don't actually seem to have a system of gears or anything at all, but instead a large, gaping slit that looks a lot like-

"The knife!" I say, facing Dean as he stares at the spirit, who seems to take on an appearance of a human man, his face rashly distorted and contorted in rage.

"The knife? It's on the other side of the room," he says, pointing at the corpse.

"Darn," I mutter. "I'm going to get it, alright?"

Dean looks at me like I'm crazy.

"You stay here," he says, but before he can do anything else, he becomes paralyzed. His body goes rigid as the spirit gives him a deathly stare.

"\_WHAT \_\_DID \_\_YOU \_\_DO \_\_TO \_\_MY \_\_BODY\_\_?\_" It yells, shaking the room violently as it does.

"What theâ€¦ Dean!" I yell, watching in horror as it advances on him, and he is completely defenseless to its approaching.

"Shit! Hang in there!" I yell, deciding to use the ghost as a diversion. I run the long way around the room, past the ghost and towards the corpse. Its body is completely lifeless, its bones white and the diary is spotless.

That spirit must have something to with the body, but I'm far too concerned about Dean and leaving the room to care.

"Hang in there, Dean!" I yell towards the far side of the room. The ghost is closing in on him, only a few meters left before they make contact. And if I do, I don't want to know what happens.

I wrench at the knife, pulling at it as hard as I can, but it stays put.

"Shit!" I say, pulling it again with fierce determination. "Get out, you stupid thing!"

I see the notebook and its rigid state. It looks as hard as a brick.

I pull it from the floor, and it's even heavier than before.

"Here goes!" I say, ramming at the leg forcefully.

The sound of bones cracking does not fear me as much as losing Dean.

"Sorry!" I say, repeatedly hitting the leg at where the knife has lodged itself.

After a while, the leg gives away and the knife falls loose. I grab it and make a break for the door.

"Dean!" I yell, the ghost barely inches away from him. I try pull him away from the ghost, but he's affixed to the spot like a statue.

I shove the knife into the lock forcefully, making sure that it sticks.

The door opens at last with a \_click\_, and I forcefully grip Dean by the collar of his black tunic and pull him outside, the spirit almost touching him.

I slam the door shut and jam the knife into the lock, where I know that it will not open again.

Slumping down beside the door, I pull Dean by my side, and begin crying again.

"Dammit, Dean!" I say, looking at his recovering body. He opens his eyes slowly and gives me a soft smile.

"Nice choice you chose there," he says, his voice recovering quickly, hugging me by the neck again.

"Dammit! Don't do that again!" I say, my face pressed against his chest.

I've yet to realize how comfortable it is and it feels so warm, so comforting, so \_nice\_.

"It's alright, it's alright..." he says, patting my back gently.  
"You're safe."

That's a lie, but it's a lie worth indulging in.

**\*\*DEAN\*\***

"What the hell, Dean," she mutters, looking at the cave ceiling, a monotone grey.

"Hey, it's not my fault that I nearly got myself killed," I say, rubbing the soft floor.

"You were paralyzed, and you nearly died," she says, muttering. I smirk.

"Still, quick thinking on your part," I say. "Nobody would have the guts like you at that."

"Except you," he shoots back, and I glare at her.

"Yes, Dean, the ever scary guy, always being fearless but friendless," I snap.

"Well, it's not my fault that you're that way," she says flatly.  
"You're just you."

"I don't care," I say. "Honestly."

She rolls her eyes.

"Alright, noble guy." she says.

I've always seen Valla as a happy girl. I've never seen her as a fearful girl.

But yet, she still looks beautiful either way.

Remembering the events from before the ghost, I stand up.

"I think that we should look for Fortylle now," I say, offering her my hand.

She looks at it with uncertainty.

"Are we seriously going through everyone else that's here?" she says, crossing her arms. "And see even more of those awful corpses and ghosts?"

I nod. "If we're going to get out of here, we'll have to stand up to anything they throw at us."

She gives me a glare. "I'm not going anywhere. I'm sick of all this."

"Valla!" I say crossly. "Get a hold of yourself! You were so brave and heroic just a damn minute ago, and now you want to stay put here?"

"I don't care!" she says, her eyes exhausted and tired. "I'm tired of this all. I want to get out of here..."

I sit back down next to her, but she pushes me away.

"Go away!" she says, glaring at me. "Do what you want!"

I glare at her. This must be the perfect example of losing one's will to go on.

"Valla, get a hold of yourself," I say, standing up and staring at her.

"Iâ€¦ I said go away!" she says, looking at me with disdain.

"No," I say flatly. "I'm not going anywhere without you."

Instead of getting back to her senses, she gets up and shoves me against the wall.

"Screw you," she says. "Screw you and your stupid crushes and Haston."

And before I can follow her, she runs off down the hall.

"Shit!" I yell, pulling myself together and running after her.

**\*\*Valla\*\***

What am I doing?

Why am I running?

Where is Dean?

All these questions swirl around me like fish swim in a pond. They don't ever land on a single answer, and any of those thoughts about answers are all clouded and murky.

"Whereâ€¦ am I?" I ask myself, feeling the walls with my fingers.

I remember snapping at him and running away. I remember passing a series of opened floors and narrow ways and never stopping to stop. I was mad at Dean. I had enough of it, but nowâ€¦ I realize that I can never leave without having more and more of it.

I have to find a way out. I have to find Dean.

I strike another long piece of wood against the torches, illuminating my path as I walk.

As I do, I begin crying again.

"Deanâ€¦ where are you..."

I should have never left him. I should have been myself, and not some stupid jerk.

I should have never shoved him.

**\*\*Dean\*\***

It's been 2 hours here now. I wonder what the people back on Berk will think.

I've been looking for Valla for nearly half an hour. Where is she?

I want to tell her that I need her to be with me now, as much as she might hate me.

I want to let her be by my side. I want to see her smile again.

I want to tell her that I love her.

I love you. I want to protect you, be with you, love you once again. I want you to know that my crush has been on you all this time, and you never knew, and I'm going to tell her that when I find her. I will hug her and make sure nothing goes wrong.

"Valla..." I mutter to myself.

The corpse earlier has been bleached white, its flesh and blood mysteriously gone, just like the one in the bedroom. The nails are still pierced deep into the arm, though, only a few strands of fibre holding the whole body together. In the distance, I see a small blue light, but I don't approach it.

At the first floor, I notice that another series of passages have opened before the entrance, allowing more access to the first floor. I follow through one of the halls and end up at a bathroom.

"A bathroom?" I ask myself. "I wonderâ€¦"

As I enter it, I notice that room feels terribly dry, completely deprived of the smell of caverns from earlier.

One of the rooms are closed shut.

"Valla?" I ask, moving towards the door. "Are you in there?"

When there is no answer, I approach it and open the door.

What I'm not prepared for, what I dreaded for so long, what I never thought I'd see, I see.

"VALLA!" I yell, shocked at the image in front of me.

Valla's body lies sitting on top of the toilet stall, her face hanging down and on her knees. There's blood everywhere, and a knife seems to have stabbed straight into her back, the cut seeming to have dragged from her torso up to her neck. Her arms are slumped down, touching the floor at odd angles. Her yellow shirt is completely soaked with blood, her hair cut in various places. There is a huge inscription written on top of the stall, saying:

i'\*\*M\*\* SoRr\*\*y\*\* DE\*\*A\*\*N

"VALLA!" I yell, falling down to my knees at the sight.

"VALLA!"

Why?!

Why?!

What happened, Valla?!

Valla?!

"WHAT THE HELL, VALLA?! VALLA!" I scream, my body going numb in shock.

"You were still laughing a few minutes ago!" I say to her lifeless body, hoping in all my power that this is a dream, and that everything would be alright.

That's a lie.

"You were still- still-" I say, tears beginning to form in my eyes as I break down like I never have before.

"VALLA!"

\*\*We \*\*\*\*were \*\*\*\*friends\*\*\*\*. \*\*\*\*We \*\*\*\*were \*\*\*\*together\*\*\*\*,  
\*\*\*\*and \*\*\*\*it \*\*\*\*looked \*\*\*\*like \*\*\*\*nothing \*\*\*\*would \*\*\*\*go

\*\*\*\*wrong\*\*\*\*. \*\*

\*\*But \*\*\*\*then\*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*with \*\*\*\*all \*\*\*\*the \*\*\*\*mistakes \*\*\*\*and  
\*\*\*\*all \*\*\*\*the \*\*\*\*wrong \*\*\*\*choices\*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*we \*\*\*\*fell  
\*\*\*\*apart\*\*\*\*.\*\*

\*\*And \*\*\*\*so \*\*\*\*did \*\*\*\*everything \*\*\*\*else\*\*\*\*.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>I'm sorry if this is rushed, but trust me, I've had worse.<strong>

#### 4. Blood and Blade

\*\*Q: \_He's still doing this stupid and pointless story that doesn't have anything to do with HTTYD?\_\*\*

\*\*A: \_Yes. But this story \_is\_ related to HTTYD.\_\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Blood is blood, but death is not death.<strong>

\*\*Fortylle\*\*

"Nghâ€|" I mutter, getting up from the mass of rubble that I am on. The rocks around me feel cold, but the stuff below me areâ€| what are they? They smell, tooâ€| I can't see properly. There's not enough light. I'll get myself into trouble if I move without caution.

"Nghâ€|" I struggle to get up as the pile below me shifts slightly, causing me to lose balance and skid off the pile. My hand tries to latch onto something, but nothing comes into contact as I fall wordlessly downwards.

Bah. This is nothing. Outcast island had me done worse than this. A little fall is nothing. I straighten my legs and arms as I look for the ground- and there it is.

My hands reach out immediately, landing on the also soft ground below I immediately register the coldness of this rock. Where am I? Is this cave someplace underneath the one that we killed the Nadder in? My mind is achingâ€|

"Oi!" someone swears from behind me. I spin around, registering another human in the rubble.

"Trigon?" I ask, frowning at his exploits. "Why are you in there?"

"I don't know, alright?!" he says, pulling himself out in vain as he tries to escape the massive jumble of soft items piled up into a hill. "We were killing that Nadder one moment, and then the next thing I know, I'm in a cave with \_human\_ bodies piled up on me!"

"Piled- what?!" I ask, squinting frantically, looking at the pile with what little light there is. Sure enough, there's an arm, there's a head, andâ€¦| andâ€¦| what? No. Those can't be. But it's right in front of me. A human arm, sticking out from the massive pile ofâ€¦| \_bodies\_â€¦| I reach out and touch the hand, jerking back immediately, but all it does is flop there uselessly. I touch it again, and I can feel its coldness andâ€¦| lifelessness.

"Oh, no," I whisper, backing away from the hand. "Oh, no, no, no."

"Hey, Fortylle!" Trigon yells, cutting my rushing thoughts off. "Can you get me out of here first?!"

"Uh, sure!" I say, regaining my senses and grabbing his own outstretched hands- which are much stronger than the ones of the deceased. I shudder at the thought. He comes out sliding, landing on the soft ground as well.

"I couldn't believe it as well, but look at it!" he says, not bothering to wait for me to ask. He points to a hand, then to a shoulder blade, then to a leg. "This place is full of people who died here. And it's as creepy as hell."

"Then let's get out of here!" I shriek, trying hard to stay calm. "Waitâ€¦| Where's Fyrver and the others?"

We both look at the huge pile stacked above our heads in unity, knowing what is in there, but not really wanting to venture in. I'm about to vomit myself, too.

"No wayâ€¦|" Trigon says, squinting above. "They'd have heard us already if they were in here."

"What if they're- they're so deep inside that they can't get out?" I whimper, looking around for any sources of light. Surely, the only one is the light emitting from the far side of the room, but it doesn't look like a room. It looks likeâ€¦|

"Holy shit!" Trigon yells, pointing to something above. "LOOK OUT!"

Trigon forcefully pulls me out of the way as a human torso, disconnected from all its other parts, falls out from the pile and lands onto the ground where I was standing just moments ago.

I turn away from the horrible sight, facing the rock wall in horror. My mind rushes with every possible thought of how this could have happened, but nothing comes to meet logic.

"Where did all of these- these- people come from?" I ask, not turning away from the wall.

"I dunno," Trigon says, clearly shaken from the event. "But there are so many dead people here. Were they killed all by the Nadder?"

I look at the ripped body parts, and the hand that still sticks out eerily.

"Then that means we're right under the Nadder's cave," I muse,



looking for anything to think of lest I hyperventilate. "But the ceiling's shut. And the cave collapsed when we killed it, right?"

"I hope your theory is wrong," Trigon mutters. "But it doesn't look like it."

This place is a place where humans died. And piled up senselessly. Like a catacomb, but without the burial. And what's worse, it's a place that we have no knowledge of. Neither Berk nor Outcast Island had anything like this before. And \_someone\_ had to have built this cave.

"Gotcha," Trigon says from a distance not far from behind me. "Found a torch around here."

Instantly, light blossoms from behind me, and I turn around- to my incredulous shock.

The whole \_cave\_ is a cylinder-like room, with the human bodies packed and piled up incredibly high to the ceiling, which lies nothing but rock, and there is no indication that it has ever cracked in the first place. Beyond the pile of bodies lie a door, but before the door-

"A pool," Trigon whispers, his face going pale. "A pool of blood."

A pool of blood flows under the door, with only a few steps leading from it down towards the hell below. Floating on top of the blood, are more body organs, and- and- a head. A \_girl's\_ head. A head severed from the rest of the body, a head whose eyes are still open and screaming in horror.

I turn towards the wall again, sinking onto the soft ground below me, closing my eyes and hoping all of this is just a bad, bad, dream.

"This is not real," I whimper to myself. "This is not real."

I want to close my eyes, and when I open again, even in Outcast Island, things would be better than this. I don't want to stay here anymore. I can't see all these corpses and theirâ€| their leftovers. That's what they all are, right? And I could become one of them in a moment's mistake. And the poolâ€| it must have taken so many bodies to fill that upâ€| no wonder the pile was completely cold. It was drained of blood. All of them.

I think of Fyrver and Haston. They were with us. If they're not here, then they're somewhere else. Maybe they made it out before us. It would have been hard to see us under what little light there wasâ€| maybe they've all gone.

But \_where?\_

I muster what little courage I have and turn around again to face Trigon.

"Let's get out of here," I say, nodding towards the door. I try to avoid looking at anything else but it. "At least we might find something outside."

"Alright," he agrees, setting around the pile and walking towards the pool. There lies more body parts, and I accidentally trip on an arm. A human armâ€| and he's holding something. A small paddle.

I let out a small shriek, something that Fyrver would have surely cringed at. I'm like a big sister to him, and if I do something wrong, he will be sure to follow. Or let me know that I did something wrong. But where is he?

"Looks like we're in luck," Trigon says, pointing to a huge wooden raft hiding by the pool's walls. "Someone's made it through and made a raft."

"It's almost as if they're waiting for us to get in," I whisper, grabbing the paddle from the arm and holding it to Trigon. "Here."

"Nuh-uh," he says, shaking his head, his long blonde hair flying everywhere. "Don't know how to."

"You don't?" I sigh, clutching the paddle tightly. Where the arm had held it, there is a small stain of blood. I slide my hands away from it quickly.

"Yeah, and you're older," he points out. "Ladies first."

I throw him a glare, lifting my feet and stepping onto the raft gingerly. It sinks slightly at my weight, but it looks strong enough to support us both.

As Trigon makes his way down as well, I can't help but notice that he's shaking. I'm one of the oldest among the group here. Well, in Berk. I have to be a good leader, even if I don't want to be one. I don't want to screw up again, like I have before.

But yet, I cannot help but see Trigon looking at me hopefully, as if he knows that I know what to do.

Breathing in loudly, I begin to paddle. I only have to crouch slightly in order to move my way through the mass of blood and water, but it's more than enough to smell the stench of blood and decomposing bodies. I see a floating knee and knock it aside before it comes in contact with the boat.

"Take it easyâ€|" I whisper to myself, hoping Trigon will not hear me. "Left, right, left, rightâ€|"

Suddenly, a huge lurch from under the boat causes me to shriek and drop the paddle.

"Shit! There's something below the water!" Trigon yells, pointing to a shadowy figure below.

"I know!" I say, reaching for the paddle- but it has gone out of my sight. I watch in horror as the figure nears us, closer and closer, before-

"I got it!" Trigon yells, snagging the paddle out of the blood, his arm coming up with the murky substance covering him. "Here!"

I paddle furiously, making sure to gain more and more distance from the shadowy figure. Behind me, the figure seems to be holding a knife.

"Fuck off!" I hear Trigon yell, batting at the underwater figure with his torch. The knife descends, but the figure continues chasing.

"Almost there!" I declare, shoving at the water with as much force as I can, until the harbour is within grasping reach-

Suddenly, a huge lurch pulls the raft back, causing the door to be out of reach once again, and I turn around to finally see the chasing creature.

It is a human, but a shining human, glowing eerily red, holding up a very, very, human knife. But there's something strange about the humanoid form; there are wings, deep-blue, bloodstained wings coming from behind him, and a tail to add to the inhumanness of the body. His body is shining in a way that you would see a ghost shine in the dark, their emission of light causing all the ever more panic to me. And its face is young. Distorted, scarred, and stained with blood, but young as well. But in its anger, nothing else of it looks young at all.

"\*\*\_You did this\_" it groans, taking a wild slash at Trigon. He jumps out of the way, but not before causing the raft to sink momentarily from the jump.

The blood sloshes around my legs, but I don't even care anymore. The raft sags as Trigon dodges blow by blow, the paddle doing nothing to help my distorting balance.

"No!" I yell, grabbing the paddle as I inch the raft bit by bit towards the door. "Hold it off, Trigon!"

Trigon chucks a piece of human arm that sloshed on when he jumped, causing the glowing human to leap up and slash the part into pieces, blood flying everywhere. Was this the thing that killed and drained all the blood from the humans on shore?

As it jumps, I see that its left wing has been tampered with. In it lies a gaping hole, disabling its ability to fly, for sure.

"Aim for its wings!" I yell, the door within reach again. I lunge for it, but it misses my arm by inches.

"Ngh!" Trigon grunts, parrying a slice from the human-spirit.

"Hang in there!" I yell, the raft drawing closer to the edge.

I grab the doorknob and wrench it open. The raft has hit the edge and is drawing back.

"Jump!" I yell, grabbing his back and pushing him towards the door. "Jump!"

"Nn!" He jumps from the raft and onto the ground beyond the door smoothly, landing on the ground without much problem. The jump, though, caused the raft to jerk back unceremoniously, and right

towards the angry human.

"Grab hold!" Trigon yells, reaching out a hand as the raft drifts further and further away.

"Gah!" I jump from the raft and land into the blood pool, but manage to grab onto Trigon's hand in the process. I feel several body organs deposited at the pool ground as I struggle to kick back up.

"That thing's coming! Hurry!" Trigon yells, pulling me upwards as I latch onto the edge.

"C'mon, c'mon," I mutter furiously, thrashing my legs and hoping that it will help me leave the pool below.

"Shit! I can't- I can't pull any harder!" he yells, yanking my arms with all his might.

"Pull harder, dammit!" I shriek, hearing the glowing figure's moans becoming louder and louder-

All of a sudden, Trigon stands up and yanks me with incredible force, pulling me clean out of the pool and flying onto the rock ground of the caves beyond the pool. As Trigon swings the door shut, I see that the beast is thrashing madly at the water's edge, unable to get up.

"You alright?" another voice asks, and I gasp as I turn around and realize who it is.

"\_Hodor!\_" I yell, sighing in relief, walking up to hug him. "You're alright!"

"I think I am," he says, shaking his head and pulling away gruffly. "I saw Trigon trying to pull you out and I got over to you two just in time."

"Thank you so much," I pant, nodding towards the only person older than me in the group. "You just saved my life."

"Hey, I deserve credit, too," Trigon mutters, to which I roll my eyes at.

"We're all in a crazy place," he says, waving off the comment. "I found myself on the stairways not far from here. Have you seen Larka anywhere?"

"No," I say, panting. "We haven't seen anyone but you. But if you came to by the stairs, then the others might be scattered around here too. Is this place big?"

"It is," he says. "I've only been through some parts of it. A lot of it is caved in, but it looks like this place used to be a place where humans lived- in a cave."

"In a cave with \_that?\_" I ask in horror, pointing towards the door that we just passed. To my surprise, above the door holds a faded out sign, reading SWIMMING POOL, but with red, careless, bloodlike colors, written over it, reading \*\*BLOOD WELL.\*\*

"That explains a bit, I guess." Trigon scratches his head thoughtfully. "This place used to be where humans lived."

"So it's been taken over by things like that?" I ask, gesturing towards the door.

"It seems so," Hodor nods, holding up a torch of his own. "I also saw one down the second floor earlierâ€| best you don't go down there."

"What did it look like?" I ask worriedly. There are more?

"Glowing red, huge mouth, and a long tail. It had wings, too, but they were sort of small."

"It could fly?" I ask in horror, remembering the beast in the blood well earlier.

"Sure it can," he says grimly. "That's why you shouldn't be around here. This is the third floor, and it might come any minute."

"Alright," I say, feeling no urgency in my words as exhaustion threatens to take over me.

"I'll be headed towards the other wing of the cave," Hodor announces. "Keep an eye out for Larka and the others, will you?"

"Of course," Trigon says, watching as he sets off, the torch bobbing up and down in his carrying.

"That thing couldn't fly," I mutter, panting heavily as I allow myself to get down on one knee slowly from fatigue. "Its wings were tampered. That's why it didn't chase."

"It's almost as if someone put wings and tails on that human," Trigon observes. "Maybe like a half-being."

"But that thingâ€| it was humanâ€|" I muse, the feelings of urgency passing despite the situation still rather urgent. "...It could even speak Norse."

"And did you see the face?" he asks, sitting down next to me. His face is no longer pale, the color returning slowly as he reverts back to his own tough-ish self. "It couldn't have been older than us. Maybe a bit more than Fyrver, but surely not more than me."

"That makes things even worse," I moan. "We now have blood pools, closed caves, and children ghosts. And the others are still missing. Sethiâ€| Vallaâ€| Hastonâ€| Fyrverâ€|"

"We'll find them," Trigon assures me. His face, usually carefree and not in thought, is now fully devoted to the cause ahead of us, and that is to get out of here, and stay alive.

"Alright, then," I say, heaving myself off the floor. "Let's get going before Wingless comes our way."

"Who?" Trigon asks, getting up after me and following me as I trudge on the cold ground.

"The ghost thing that Hodor said was on the second floor," I say.  
"You know, the one down these stairs-"

**\*\*TRIGON\*\***

"Shh!" I mutter, listening to the sounds from the second floor. This staircase seems to connect to the third and second floor, but the path to the fourth has been cut off completely by a large- no, huge, rock. It's as if we're just at the end of the hallway, and below is where the human-wingless thing is.

Screams from the second floor's stairs cause us to fall silent. Then we see a figure flying through the hall at incredible speed- so fast that neither of us can see who, but surely a human figure, is launched through-

**\*\*\_SPLURT.\_\*\***

-in the second afterwards, we feel the cave shake and a large splurt is heard from the impact of the body, which is in the hall and out of sight- but only several feet away from us. The body just collided onto the wall right next to the stairs, and I can see something flying from the rubble as it collides onto the wall-

"No," I whisper in shock. "Hell no."

-a green, little knife. It clangs loudly by the foot of the stairs, not far from the point of collision, and rests there for us to view in full glamour. It's Fyrver's knife- the one he used to kill the Nadder with.

I turn towards Fortylle instantly, grabbing her arms just in time before she launches herself towards the splattered body- which neither of us cannot assume to not be Fyrver.

"Get a hold of yourself, Fortylle," I say urgently, locking her arms and backing her away slowly from the second floor as she tries to break free from my grip.

**\*\*\_FYRVER!\_\*\*** she screams, legs thrashing in vain. "Let me go! I've got to-"

"Stop!" I say, pulling her back towards the third floor. "That thing might be on us any moment! Just get out of here first, alright?"

"Thatâ€¦ that thing killed Fyrver!" she yells, sinking down to the cold ground in agony. "That- that-"

"We've got to get out of here," I say quickly, shaking her to get her up. "And we can't be sure it was him, either. That-"

"NO!" she yells, sobbing madly. "That was him! Didn't you see the knife? He had it with him!"

"How come we don't have ours, then?" I say urgently, trying to make her get up. "That might have just been another knife. C'mon, let's go-"

"FYRVER!" I let her yell one more time, before clamping my hand down on her mouth. Hard.

"Let's find a safe place to hide first and then we'll get things sorted through, alright?" I growl, dragging her backwards. "You're not going \_anywhere\_ near the second floor."

"Fyrver..." I hear her whimper as she finally gives into my words and lets me drag her along the hall, past the Blood Well room, and near the wall on the opposite side.

"That wasn't him, was it?" she asks in a small voice, sobs racking her body once again. "Surely not?"

"I'm sure of that," I say, but my voice hides its doubts. Surely no one else would be carrying that same knife Aesis gave him, right? Or it wasn'tâ€|

"Why is this happening?" she asks, forcing herself to regain control of herself. "Why are there bodies everywhere? Where are we?"

"I don't know," I say, patting her shoulder in comfort, a comfort that will not easily come from me- or anything else in this horrid place. "But this place is cursed. And we've got to get out of here."

\* \* \*

><p><strong>LN: I might as well spoil it for you... or some parts of it.\*\*

\*\*Cheatsheet: \*\*

\*\*Trigon- Tuffnut\*\*

\*\*Fortylle- Heather \*\*

\*\*Fyrver- The Typhoomerang that Hiccup found. He and Heather are from Outcast Island in this universe.\*\*

End  
file.